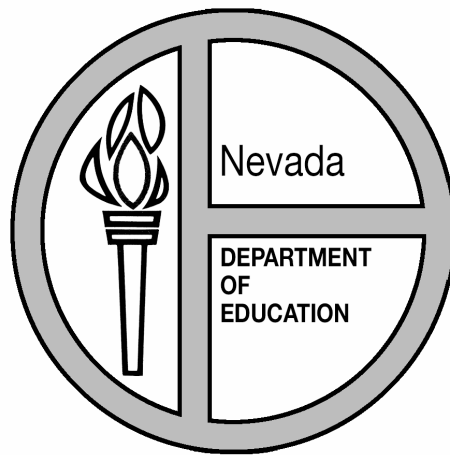


2003-2004
PRACTICE GUIDE FOR NEVADA STATE
ASSESSMENT WRITING TASKS



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Writing Tasks Associated With the Nevada Criterion Reference Tests (CRT)	
Nevada CRT Test Format in Grades 5 and 8	2
	4-30
I. Constructed-Response Items in Reading, Mathematics, and Science	
Types of Constructed-response items by content with 5 th grade examples	4-7
Steps for Students in Constructing a Response	8
Writing Practice and Sample Lessons	9-13
Practice for types of item responses	9-11
Practice for framing responses	12
Scaffolding for second-language learners	13
Edit checklist for students	14
Grade 8 reading practice and sample items	15-22
Grade 5 mathematics sample items	23
Grade 8 mathematics sample items	24-26
Grade 5 science sample items	27-28
Grade 8 science sample items	29-30
	31-33
II. Grades 4 and 8 Writing Examinations	
Examples	31
Teacher tips	31-32
Trait-by-trait tips	32-33
Resources for writing teachers	34
	35
References	
	36-40
Appendix A - Writing Process	

PRACTICE FOR NEVADA STATE ASSESSMENT WRITING TASKS

Introduction

This booklet is designed to assist teachers and students with writing tasks associated with the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program. While many people are familiar with the multiple-choice format of standardized tests, the additional performance assessment tasks of writing divergently to open-ended topics and writing convergently to close-ended items is sometimes perceived as a unique requirement normally reserved for classroom-based assessments. Hopefully, the following explanations and strategies will support an understanding of the required tasks for the state assessments.

Teachers are encouraged to adapt and add to suggested activities with the understanding that they will forward their suggestions to the Nevada Department of Education to share with colleagues in the revised editions of this publication to provide a resource for Nevada teachers by Nevada teachers.

Special thanks to Carol Harriman, Paul Richter, Cindy Sharp, Richard Vineyard, James Brant, and Mary King for their assistance in creating and producing this document.

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Writing Tasks Associated With the Nevada Criterion Reference Tests (CRT)

The two types of criterion reference writing tasks required of students for the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program are 1) writing in response to a constructed response item in a content area (e.g., reading, math, or science) to determine understanding of a specific content standard, and 2) writing in response to a writing prompt to demonstrate writing ability and achievement on the state writing assessments.

These two types of writing assignments require different literacy and organizational skills for response and different instruction and practice for mastery. The following booklet is divided into two parts: the first deals with the writing tasks and practice in responding to writing to constructed response items. The second part addresses the task of writing to a provided prompt to demonstrate proficiency in writing.

Nevada CRT Test Format in Grades 5 and 8

The Nevada CRT assessments are designed to measure student knowledge of the Nevada Standards. There are two types of test items associated with the test: selected response and constructed response. The selected response items are in multiple-choice format and provide examinees with four possible choices. The constructed-response items are items that require students to actually construct written responses to close-ended items or prompts, as opposed to selecting one alternative among several in the multiple choice format. The items may contain multi-part problems and will require an extended response (i.e., several sentences or paragraphs.)

The multiple-choice items are often accompanied with a narrative or graphic illustration, or in the case of language arts an extended reading passage, and students are required to select the appropriate response. The multiple-choice items can be categorized into three types: absolute correct answer, best-answer, and complex alternatives.

I. Constructed-Response Items in Reading, Mathematics, and Science

Types of Constructed-Response Items by Content

The constructed response items are intended to measure higher level thinking skills and to give a clear understanding of student's knowledge of content and process. Students are sometimes required to draw pictures, diagrams, or charts to demonstrate understanding and must also describe their thinking in words. The descriptors calling for constructed response in math and science include tasks such as:

*Describe three ways that...

*Describe what...

*Predict how...

Contrast...

Solve and explain....

List and explain...

List, prioritize, and justify

List, explain, justify

Graph data from an explanations

Explain graphed data

*When students are asked to describe or predict, the task is not open-ended; an established, correct response is expected and will sometimes entail explanation or listing.

The descriptors calling for constructed response in English/language arts rely on information within provided text. They often include tasks such as:

Identify and explain...

Explain and list details...

List and explain...

Draw conclusions/inferences and justify your reasons based on the passage...

Describe and explain...

List, then compare/contrast...

Choose, identify, and explain...

When opinions are called for, they must be substantiated by the text and are not an opportunity to display divergent thought.

Reading

Constructed-response items for 5th grade English/language arts will usually be from among the following progress indicators from standards two, three, and four:

- 2.5.3 - Select and use a variety of skills and strategies during reading such as identifying main ideas, identifying fact and opinion or cause and effect, verifying predictions, summarizing, paraphrasing, and drawing conclusions to aid comprehension.

Example:

➤ *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* is a fairy tale with a lesson. Using information from the story,

A. describe three things that occurred to make Little Bear upset.

- B. explain what *Goldilocks* might do the next time she discovers a vacant house and why.
- 3.5.1 – Distinguish main incidents of a plot that lead to the climax, and explain how the problem or conflict is resolved.
Example:
 - *The Cat in the Hat* tells the story about an adventure two children had with a mischievous cat. Imagine you are Sally in *The Cat in the Hat*. Using details from the story, describe two experiences you had on that cold, cold, wet day **and** how it was all resolved in the end.
- 3.5.2 - Make inferences supported by the text about characters' traits and motivations and make predictions about conflicts and resolutions.
Example:
 - *The Tortoise and the Hare* tells about a race between two animals. Using information from the fable,
 - explain how the two characters are alike and how they are different.
 - describe how it affected the story's conclusion.
- 3.5.4 - Compare stated and implied themes in a variety of works.
Example:
 - *Cinderella* and *Snow White* are two fairy tale classics. Using the two stories tell how they have similar themes.
- 4.5.1 - Use knowledge of format, graphics, sequence, diagrams, illustrations, charts, and maps to comprehend text.
Example:
 - *Little Red Riding Hood* is a fairy tale about a little girl's adventures on her way to her grandmother's house to deliver a basket of food. Using the map provided, describe how the wolf arrived at Grandma's house before Red Riding Hood.
- 4.5.4 - Draw conclusions and make inferences about text supported by textual evidence and experience.
Example:
 - *The Emperor's New Clothes* is a tale about a vain ruler who wanted to wear the very best clothing in the world. Using *The Emperor's New Clothes*,
 - compare other people's reactions to that of the little boy's reaction at the end.
 - Give reasons why they might have said what they did.
- 4.5.5 - Identify authors' ideas and purposes in texts, including advertisements and public documents.
Example:
 - The United States Constitution is the document on which all federal U.S. law is based. In the preamble of the United States Constitution, what did Jefferson mean by "in order to form a more perfect union"?

Document is available at

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/constitution.overview.html>

Please see <http://www.nde.state.nv.us/sca/testing/crt/> for additional Fifth Grade CRT practice items.

Constructed response items for 8th grade English/language arts will be from among the following progress indicators from standards two, three, and four:

- 2.8.3 – Apply and analyze a variety of skills and strategies such as locating essential information, verifying predictions, drawing conclusions, and making inferences to aid comprehension.
- 3.8.1 – Evaluate story elements such as character, conflict, plot, subplot, parallel episodes, and climax to determine their importance to a story.
- 3.8.2 – Make inferences and predictions supported by the text regarding the motives of characters and consequences of action.
- 4.5.1/4.8.1 – Use knowledge of format, graphics, sequence, diagrams illustrations, charts, and maps to comprehend text. Use knowledge of text features and common expository structures such as cause/effect and compare/contrast to comprehend text.
- 4.8.3 – Locate, interpret, organize, and synthesize information from texts to answer specific questions and support ideas.
- 4.8.5 – Summarize authors' ideas and information in texts, including advertisements and public documents.

Please see pages 14-21 of this book for Eighth Grade CRT practice items in English/language arts.

Math

Constructed-response items for 5th grade mathematics will generally be from among those progress indicators that deal with

- generating and solving problems based on examples in practical situations.
- creating and using models and drawings to identify, compare, and solve problems.
- identifying, describing, defining, and drawing geometric figures.
- constructing, collecting, organizing, reading, and interpreting data using a variety of graphic representations including tables, line plots, stem and leaf plots, scatter plots, histograms
- using supplied data to draw and explain conclusions and predictions

Please see page 22 of this book for a sample of Fifth Grade CRT practice items using the constructed response format in math.

Constructed-response items for 8th grade mathematics will generally be from among the following progress indicators:

- using reasoning to find missing terms in number and geometric patterns and to generalize basic patterns to the n th term
- identifying, modeling describing, and evaluating relationships, including functions.
- describing how changing one variable affects the remaining variables in a mathematical relationship
- modeling, identifying and solving linear equations and inequalities

- identifying, describing, classifying, comparing, and drawing regular and irregular polygons
- evaluating conclusions based on data analysis and how format/scale changes will alter findings
- formulating inferences and projections based on data

Please see pages 23-25 of this book for Eighth Grade CRT practice items using the constructed response format in math.

Science

Constructed-response items in 5th and 8th grade science are based on content from among the six strands: physical science, life science, earth and space sciences, environmental sciences, the nature and history of science, and scientific inquiry - processes and skills. Test items often ask students to:

Identify factors and explain

Describe cause-effect

Explain differences

Describe interactions

Explain changes (e.g., adaptations, transformations, alterations of states of matter, etc.)

Design experiments, give details, and describe expected outcomes

Some of the items require multi-part responses, for example:

Draw a diagram, complete a table, and explain/identify findings.

Please see pages 26-29 of this book for fifth and eighth grade CRT practice items using the constructed response format in science.

Writing/Thinking Skills and Test Tasks			
Writing/Thinking	Tasks		Test
Knowledge, comprehension (Finding out)	<i>List</i>	<i>Define</i>	ELA
	<i>Identify</i>	<i>Locate</i>	Science
		<i>Graph</i>	
Application (Making use of known)	<i>Construct</i>	<i>Chart</i>	Science
	<i>Diagram</i>	<i>Report</i>	Math
	<i>Map</i>	<i>Demonstrate</i>	
Analysis (Taking apart an idea)		<i>Infer</i>	ELA
	<i>Compare</i>	<i>Order</i>	Science
	<i>Contrast</i>	<i>Differentiate</i>	Math
	<i>Separate</i>	<i>Classify</i>	
Evaluation		<i>Discuss</i>	
	<i>Judge & Justify</i>	<i>Choose</i>	ELA
	<i>Prioritize & Defend</i>	<i>Decide</i>	
	<i>Conclude</i>	<i>Verify</i>	

Steps for Students in Constructing a Response

Step 1

Because some items have multiple answers embedded in the question, students must read each question carefully and decide all the parts required for a complete response.

Decide what the question is asking for.

Remember that:

Who is looking for a person or people

Where is calling for a place.

When is asking for a date or time

What is requesting facts.

Why is requiring a reason.

How needs steps.

Explain is asking for information/reasons

Describe is looking for details/reasons

Step 2

Turn the question into a topic sentence answer.

The next time Goldilocks wanders across a vacant house, she will probably....

Step 3:

Collect needed information.

Go back to the passage and list, cluster, draw or in some way gather the reasons for your answer. Make sure you get all the relevant details you will need.

Step 4:

Organize the reasons in a logical order.

Show your reader where you have included details from the passage or how you have solved the problem.

Step 5:

Write your answer.

Make sure your writing is legible so that readers will be able to understand what you are saying.

Step 6:

Re-read and check your answer.

Review the question and your answer **making sure you completely answered all parts of the question** and that your details and information are accurate.

Repeat steps 5 and 6, until you are satisfied with your response. Sometimes, you can go back and check other test items, and then come back to this one for a final check.

Writing Practice and Sample Lessons

Practice for Types of Item Responses

QAR

The QAR technique (Raphael, 1986) helps students to determine where they might find the answer to a comprehension item: “right there” on the page, between the lines, or beyond the information provided in the passage. The steps include:

- ? Read the question(s) before reading the text. Test items are read prior to the passage as a preview to determining the purpose for reading and to organize note-taking strategies.
- ? Predict how to answer to the item. Students must decide which type of question and the type of thinking and writing required.
- ? Read the passage. Students read the passage while thinking about the items and gathering information, examples, and details that may be used in their response.
- ? Reread and respond to the item. Students reread the item, determine where to find the necessary information/support for responses, locate them, and write.
- ? Evaluate responses. Students share responses aloud in pairs, small groups, or as part of a whole class discussion.

Listen and Tell/Re-tell (For main idea, summarizing, and paraphrasing questions)

Some items require students to summarize or re-tell incidents from the reading passages. For these types of items there are a variety of progressive strategies to use.

1. Teacher reads aloud a short story or informational passage and then re-tells it in her/his own words; then she/he models aloud while writing a summary.
2. Teacher reads aloud short piece of informational text or short simple story. Students orally re-tell the passage to a partner. Repeat with a second piece and have students re-tell the passage allowing the second partner an opportunity to re-tell.
3. Teacher reads aloud a short informational text; in partners, one student orally re-tells the information, while the second student writes for both of them. Teacher re-reads the same text and students revise their writing together.
4. Two short pieces are provided for students at their instructional level. One student reads aloud, the other re-tells and together they write the summary and then revise, going back to the text for information and details. They reverse roles with the second piece.
5. Individually, students read a short piece and write a re-telling, then exchange papers, compare with a partner, and revise as needed. Papers are submitted for teacher response and evaluation.
6. Use transition words to identify when the passage is signaling you to list, summarize, compare/contrast, pay attention to details, etc. Use them also to frame your own written response.

Transition Words for Extended Explanations in Reading and Writing

and	first	second	third
more	moreover	furthermore	also
besides	finally	some	many
For one thing	next	in addition	another

Locate and Interpret Information (For information/explanation items requiring multiple or extended examples)

1. Practice collecting information. The most important strategy is for students to understand what they are looking for and then to re-read the passage, taking notes to gather examples or detailed information.
2. Practice collecting information and then organizing. Formats can include: large/small group brainstorming sessions, lists, T-charts, post-it charts, etc.
3. Practice collecting information in an organized fashion with graphic organizers or lists. Formats can include: KWL charts, graphic organizers designed for each of the types of response, e.g., large idea/subsets beneath.
4. As a group, collect information from the passage and display it for the all participants. Have students individually write sentences to respond to the item. Read aloud individual sentences. On the basis of the individual responses, write a group response that incorporates all student ideas in an organized paragraph. Using the rubric (ELA page 21, math page 24, or science page 28-29), collectively evaluate the group response.
5. Read the test items first, then as teacher reads aloud from the passage, students raise their hands as they hear information pertinent to the question. That information is written and displayed for possible use in constructing the item response. Teacher resumes reading and additional information is collected and recorded.

Transition Words for Providing Information/Examples

For example
For instance

To illustrate
Such as

Specifically
Following are

Describe Cause and Effect

One response pattern for test items is showing how certain events or ideas can cause, or lead to other events or ideas. Cause and effect writing usually asks why, and then answers it.

1. A teacher-led think aloud is one way to introduce this format. As a class, begin by listing the event or condition given in the item. Then brainstorm to generate ideas about its causes and its effects. It is useful to use an organized graphic such as a T-chart with causes on one side and effects on the other or use arrows to indicate cause → effect. Then discuss the causes and effects listed. Check to be sure that no faulty conclusions have been drawn. (Conclusions are faulty if the cause-and-effect relationship does not exist or if it is unreasonable or cannot be clearly established.) Then organize all the causes and effects in a reasonable order based either on two groups consisting of all the causes and all the effects or on a point-by-point connection of each cause-effect match. If it is difficult to make a clear distinction between cause and effect, the group approach is usually the best. Then form subgroups of the groups to determine the order of writing the response. In writing, remember to include examples to support each of their cause and effect relationships.

Transition Words for Cause and Effect

because	thus	consequently
since	so	caused by
due to	therefore	as a result
for the reason that	hence	for that reason

Compare and Contrast Information

Compare and contrast items are used to describe, inform, explain, and/or persuade and will ask students to show how things or ideas are alike or different. Questions for students to ask themselves include:

What is being compared and contrasted?

What words or phrases are signaling when an idea needs to be compared and contrasted?

What ideas do I want to include?

How should I organize them?

- One method of organization is the “block method”. Students write about one subject completely and then write about the other subject.
- A second method of organization is the “point-by-point” method. Students write about different aspects/points of each subject in alternating sentences.

What will be my opening/topic sentence?

How will I use transition words to connect my ideas?

What will be my closing sentence?

Signal words to help students write compare and contrast responses:

Transition Words for Compare and Contrast

<i>To show sameness</i>	<i>To show difference:</i>
similarly	in contrast
in the same way	on the other hand
in like manner	contrasted with
likewise	on the contrary
also	quite the opposite
although	but
still	however
On the one hand...	yet on the other hand...

1. Provide models of compare and contrast writing, to evaluate organizational patterns in large/small group discussions.
2. In teams of two, practice writing by using the point-by-point method and the block method with student preferences/favorites, e.g., sports, video productions, story characters, etc. generated from a common list of details.
3. Use Venn diagrams to organize information. Practice organizing writing from the diagrams by using transitions to organize and connect ideas.

Practice for Framing Responses

A response will usually consist of one paragraph that is well-organized and discusses only one topic or idea. Each paragraph will have three basic parts: an introductory statement, a series of sentences to support the introductory statement, and a concluding statement.

Openers (For constructing an opening sentence)

Sometimes half the battle is just getting started. Understanding exactly what the item is requiring is the most important place to begin. Here are some ways to practice getting that first important focusing sentence out.

1. Teacher reads the passage and the question (simple one-part answer) aloud and then rereads the passage. Class discusses what the question is asking. List for whole class viewing, several ways to begin an opening sentence to respond to this question and a framework for the remaining response.
2. Teacher reads the passage and the question aloud. Discuss in groups of two or three what the question is asking. Turn this question into an opening statement and make it into a banner to display for the other groups and follow up with a class discussion about the opening and a framework for the remaining portion of the response.
3. Teacher reads the passage and the question (multi-part answer) aloud and then rereads the passage. Class discusses what the question is asking. List several ways to begin an opening sentence to respond, making sure a framework is in place to answer all parts of the question. Display class openings and framework for response.
4. In teams of two or three, students read aloud a passage and question and answer the following questions: Is there more than one part to the answer for this question? How can we turn the question into a statement? How will we respond to the rest of the question? Students compose individual opening statements to the question, read aloud to one another, revise, and submit for teacher response and evaluation.

Frameworks (For continuing)

Once the opening sentence is drafted, a series of supporting ideas must be gathered and written into sentences.

1. Practice collecting information in lists, clusters, and using other graphic organizers.
2. Include main ideas, supporting details, examples and other justification for your response. Make sure they directly relate to the item.

Closing (To conclude the answer)

A conclusion is not always necessary in the constructed response items. However, if students are practicing effective writing skills, here are some practice techniques for teaching them effective conclusions.

1. The traditional method is to start off with a standard phrase, “In conclusion...” or “To sum up...” or “Consequently, ...” followed by a summarizing statement, usually fashioned after the introductory statement or topic sentence.
2. By re-reading what has preceded the last few lines, students can get a sense of how to re-word a beginning/topic sentence or close out culminating thoughts.

Importance of Sustained Reading Practice

It is important for students to have practice in reading over sustained periods of time in order to build stamina for reading frustration-level text. While good classroom instruction is based on instructional level reading, tests will often include passages that are above the instructional level of some of the students. Those who are most at risk of not performing well on the test are the same students who will most likely find the text to be at a point above their independent reading level. Strategies for dealing with frustration-level reading will help them deal with the test-taking dilemma of reading difficult text over an extended period of time. Standards-based classroom instruction can assist by

- presenting students with multiple opportunities to read and write in response to a variety of genres: fiction, non-fiction, functional (how-to) text, and poetry.
- increasing sustained silent reading and writing time in gradual increments to build student concentration levels for reading and writing over extended periods of time as are typical of testing situations.
- providing discussion and activities with a variety of strategies for dealing with the genre of typical assessment text, i.e., brief passages from a number of different genre, each followed by several (four to eight) multiple choice and constructed-response items.
- reminding students to re-read and completely understand item requirements before proceeding to select from multiple-choice responses or write to selected-response items.
- cautioning students that it’s important to look for evidence in the text rather than personal opinions in selecting correct responses.
- reading and discussing texts from the perspective of a test designer, predicting the questions that might be attached to a text.
- modeling positive self-talk. Just because one passage or item seems impossible, the next item or the one after that may be much more easily understood.

If teachers are designing their own practice materials, or if commercial test-taking products are being used in classrooms, make certain they mimic the same format and style of the actual test. Be assured that the single best preparation for the CRT tests is to provide students with a deep understanding and fluency in the actual processes of reading and writing.

Scaffolding for Second-language Learners

“Scaffolds” are temporary frameworks used in guiding interactions to support students in performing at a level slightly above their independent level of operation. To assist second-language learners, classrooms must continually provide many avenues for success in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Depending on a student’s proficiency, students can begin to respond to the items orally with dictation and assistance in rereading and revising responses as a member of a pair or group.

1. Stress the importance of re-reading the passage more than twice. Model this by reading aloud a short passage twice to the group. Then read the text a third time as students write whatever notes they can. Then, in pairs have students compare and discuss their notes, trying to reconstruct the text. In groups of four (combined pairs), repeat the process of comparing and reconstructing the text. Provide students with a copy of the original text to allow students to compare their versions with the original.
2. Have students:
 - a. read all the question/item before they begin
 - b. restate the question in their own words
 - c. divide each of the multi-part questions into separate questions and restate in their own words.
 - d. build on the words they know and understand first, before proceeding to unknown words
 - e. look for relationships between what they know and the item.
3. Because constructed response items in math, science, and reading do not need to be in complete sentences, help students to use bullets or numbered lists to respond. This will save cognitive overload in searching for the right word, and allow them to focus on the content called for in the item.

Edit Checklist for Students
Student Checklist

My writing answers all of the question or questions.	Yes	No
--	-----	----

I give enough details and information.	Yes	No
--	-----	----

I need to add information in these places.

Each paragraph talks about one thing and has a topic sentence.	Yes	No
--	-----	----

I checked my conventions (spelling, capitals, periods, indents) so readers will be able to understand what I am saying.	Yes	No
--	-----	----

I have used my best handwriting so readers will not be confused by what they are reading.	Yes	No
--	-----	----

Grade 8 Reading Practice and Sample Items

Sample I – Non-fiction Biography

(Based on *Lincoln: A Photobiography* by Russell Freedman

(Available on page 440-445 in McDougal Littell The Language of Literature – Grade 8)

(Also available on pp. 119-130 in *Lincoln: A Photobiography* Clarion Books, New York, 1987)

1. Based on the passage (p. 444) “mourners” means people who are
 - a. curious.
 - b. sad.
 - c. mad.
 - d. excited.(1.8.4)
2. Lincoln often kept newspaper articles that
 - a. informed him.
 - b. complimented him.
 - c. ridiculed his enemies.
 - d. denounced slavery.(2.8.3)
3. When Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton murmured, “Now he belongs to the ages,” (p. 444) he meant that Lincoln.
 - a. was assassinated at an old age.
 - b. died, but will be remembered forever.
 - c. assassinated while in office.
 - d. died after predicting his own death.(1.8.5)
4. Lincoln was buried in
 - a. Chicago.
 - b. Washington DC.
 - c. Springfield.
 - d. Richmond.(2.8.3)
5. Which of the following was the main concern Lincoln had about the treatment of the South after the war? He was concerned that the South would
 - a. be punished.
 - b. rise up again.
 - c. become richer than the North.
 - d. want to send men to Congress.(3.8.2)
6. Lincoln was concerned about his own death because he

- a. received threatening letters.
- b. was an unpopular president.
- c. had won the war.
- d. was glad the war was over.

(2.8.3)

7. Where did the assassination take place?

- a. The East Room of the White House
- b. Ford's Theater
- c. In a boardinghouse
- d. In the Capital dome

(2.8.3)

8. Historians have spent a great deal of time studying and describing Abraham Lincoln's character. According to the passage what are three characteristics/character traits of Lincoln based on his thoughts and actions? Use details to support your answer.

(3.8.2)

9. Abraham Lincoln was concerned about his wife. Based on information provided in the passage, describe three reasons why Lincoln was worried about her. (3.8.2)

10. Lincoln's death affected many Americans. Describe the mood of the country following Lincoln's death. List three things that support your answer. (3.8.2)

11. The passage states that Lincoln's friends were worried about his safety. Describe the precautions taken to protect the president, giving at least three examples of protective measures. (2.8.3)

Sample II – Non-fiction - Informational

What's In a Name?

Names help us organize and understand things. Common nouns identify objects and proper nouns identify specific items of those objects. For example, a common noun is *girl*; a proper noun tells which girl, *Nancy*. One of your names probably identifies your family name and another may tell which member of the family you are. For example, John Smith's last name tells the name of his family, Smith, and his first name, John, tells which member of the Smith family he is. Often in school, your last name will be used to sort you and your classmates in attendance lists.

Scientists from all over the world use names to identify plants and animals so they can understand which living things they are describing. Since they all speak different languages, they use an international language to name the plants and animals they are studying. Latin, a language used in ancient Rome and the root of many modern day languages, is used.

Just as many people have more than one name, animals and plants usually go by two names too. The first name is usually for the larger group or genus to which it belongs. The second name tells its species. It is a more specific name. This system of naming is

16

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called “the system of binomial nomenclature.” It means two-name naming. Living things are grouped by similar characteristics. For example housecats, lions, bobcats, and tigers are all in the same genus called *Felis*, but in different species. A lion belongs to the species *leo*; therefore its scientific name is *Felis leo*. Can you guess the identity of a relative of the lion? Her name is *Felis domesticus*, which means she is not wild and is raised and cared for by people. Our house cat shares the same genus name, but her species name identifies her as domesticated.

Who chooses the names for all the different species of living things? The first person to describe an organism in print is given the privilege. However, the new name must follow the international code of rules for scientific naming. Many new species of plants and animals are discovered, identified, described, and named each year. If you were to find a new species what might you name it? Perhaps some day you will.

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1. The passage talks about the two-name system used by scientists. Describe some of the uses of a two-name system. Include at least two reasons for using more than one name to identify things. (2.8.3)
2. Latin is used to describe living things because it
 - a. is a time-honored tradition.
 - b. helps scientists who speak different languages.
 - c. means two-naming systems.
 - d. provides more specific names.(2.8.3)
3. Which statement about the story is NOT true?
 - a. Names are used to classify and sort specific items.
 - b. Names help group living things by characteristics.
 - c. Names are used to describe and identify living things.
 - d. Names cause groups to behave in certain ways.(2.8.3)
4. Based on the usage of nomenclature in the article, what would planetary nomenclature mean?
 - a. Number of planets
 - b. Naming of planets
 - c. Number of plants
 - d. Naming of plants(1.8.3)
5. The author **most likely** wrote this passage to
 - a. convince.
 - b. entertain.
 - c. inform.
 - d. forecast.

(4.8.3)

6. The term domesticated as used in the passage means
- house-trained.
 - clean.
 - hungry.
 - groomed.

(1.8.4)

7. Based on the passage, which is the best way to describe how new animals receive their scientific names?
- They apply for status to the SNA (Society for Naming Animals).
 - The first person who sees one is the first person to name it.
 - A committee decides which name is best.
 - The first person to publish a description of it names it.

(2.8.3)

8. This passage compares the naming of animals to the naming of
- cats.
 - people.
 - nouns.
 - committees.

(2.8.3)

9. You would most likely find this passage in a
- geography book.
 - Latin book.
 - English book.
 - science book.

(4.8.1)

10. The passage talks about the advantages in naming. Identify two differences between naming people and naming plants and animals. (2.8.3)

Sample III - Poetry

Macavity: The Mystery Cat by T. S. Eliot

(Available on page 408-409 in McDougal Littell The Language of Literature – Grade 8)

(Also on pp. 32-34 in *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1939)

1. In stanza five, the word “rifled” means to
- file in another way.
 - ransack or plunder.
 - break or demolish.
 - fire a rifle.

(1.8.4)

2. How might the story change if Macavity was the narrator? Describe the incidents from his point of view.

(3.8.2)

3. The author most likely thinks Macavity is

- a. evil.
- b. mischievous.
- c. useless.
- d. handsome.

(2.8.3)

4. Mungojerrie and Griddlebone, described in stanza 40, are most likely

- a. places.
- b. foreign criminals.
- c. cats.
- d. police.

(1.8.4)

5. Using information from the poem, provide a character sketch of Macavity.

(3.8.2)

6. In stanza 23 and 24 the “milk is missing” and the “larder’s looted” are examples of

- a. figurative language.
- b. metaphor.
- c. simile.
- d. alliteration.

(1.8.5)

7. The author most likely wrote this poem to

- a. convince people to adopt stray cats.
- b. explain the dangers of mysterious crimes.
- c. warn people about the mystery cat.
- d. entertain with the antics of cats.

(3.8.4)

8. In stanza 34 the line “Or engaged in doing complicated long division sums” is an example of

- a. metaphor.
- b. simile.
- c. personification.
- d. analogy.

(1.8.5)

Sample IV - Fiction

The Gift of the Magi by O. Henry

(Available on page 427-431 in McDougal Littell The Language of Literature – Grade 8)
and webfree download at http://www.auburn.edu/~vestmon/Gift_of_the_Magi.html

1. According to the author, the characters Della and Jim could best be described as
 - a. thoughtless.
 - b. worried.
 - c. curious.
 - d. wise.

(3.8.1)

2. The author **most likely** gave the story this title because
 - a. the story of the Magi and this story are both about gifts of love.
 - b. this story is about holiday gifts exchanged between a husband and wife.
 - c. the story of the Magi and this story both have Christmas settings.
 - d. this story is filled with magical wishes just like the story of the Magi.

(3.8.4)

3. In the phrase on p. 428, "...Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters", the phrase "like a cascade of brown waters" is an example of
 - a. simile.
 - b. prediction.
 - c. analogy.
 - d. personification.

(1.8.5)

4. *The Gift of the Magi* is a story about a married couple who is anticipating Christmas gift-giving. Based on details in the story, provide evidence that Jim and Della did not have much money.

(2.8.3)

5. In the paragraph on p. 430 that says that Jim was "as immovable as a setter at the scent of a quail", it means that Jim was
 - a. jumpy.
 - b. still.
 - c. strong.
 - d. unfortunate.

(1.8.5)

6. What did Della say that indicates she is optimistic?
 - a. Isn't it a dandy, Jim?
 - b. My hair grows so fast, Jim!
 - c. Please, God, make him think I am still pretty.

- d. He'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl.
(2.8.3)

7. *The Gift of the Magi* describes several unexpected events. When Jim came home he was surprised. What did Jim discover that surprised him when he came home? Why was it surprising? Explain the reasons for his reactions to the surprise. Use details from the passage to support your answer. (2.8.3)

8. Which of the following provides a theme for this story?
- a. All's well that ends well.
 - b. People sacrifice for those they love.
 - c. It is difficult to live in poverty.
 - d. Gift-giving is part of the Christmas season.

(3.8.4)

9. At the beginning of the story, Della had
- a. \$.60
 - b. \$8.00
 - c. \$1.87
 - d. \$20.00

(2.8.3)

10. In the story, the word "intoxication" means
- a. drunkenness.
 - b. happiness.
 - c. unconsciousness.
 - d. selfishness.

(1.8.3)

11. Della sheds a tear or two because she
- a. thinks Jim has forgotten her present.
 - b. doesn't want to cut her hair.
 - c. misses Jim while he's at work.
 - d. wants to live in a better apartment.

(3.8.2)

12. After she cuts her hair, Della is afraid she looks like
- a. the Queen of Sheba.
 - b. a truant schoolgirl.
 - c. a chorus girl.
 - d. the Magi.

(2.8.3)

13. Jim falls into a trance when he first sees Della has cut her hair because
- a. the combs he has bought her won't work in short hair.

- b. he is worried that he can't love her with short hair.
 - c. he didn't want her to sacrifice her hair for a present.
 - d. the house is too cold for Della without her hair.
- (2.8.3)

Sample V – Non-fiction Narrative

From All Things Bright and Beautiful by James Herriot

(Available on page 84-87 in McDougal Littell The Language of Literature – Grade 8)

After students have practiced with some of the items in the previous samples, they can begin to design some of their own items based on the Thinking Skills chart on page 4.

Have students practice constructing their own items to the story based on

- List, Identify, Define, Locate
- Compare, Contrast, Separate, Deduce, Infer, Order, Differentiate, Classify
- Judge and Justify, Discuss, Choose, Decide, Verify, Conclude, Prioritize, and Defend

By dividing into pairs/groups, each team could focus on the kinds of questions that might best fit with this story. Teams can exchange questions for correct answers and for response to appropriateness to the task.

This is similar to passages on the test in terms of length and in the development of narrative plot and characterization.

Sample VI Poetry

Paul Revere's Ride by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

And webfree download at <http://www.nationalcenter.org/PaulRevere'sRide.html>

This is another selection from which students can design their own questions.

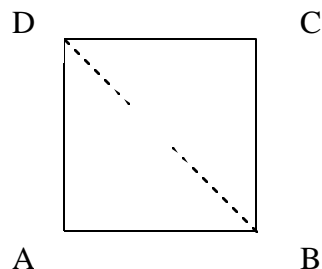
Constructed Response Scoring Rubric for Reading

Score Point	Expectation
3	Response completely and accurately answers the item. The response includes sufficient and relevant supporting details from the passage.
2	The response provides limited information and/or explanation and some relevant details from the passage, but may contain a few inaccuracies.
1	The response attempts to respond to the item, but may contain numerous inaccuracies or misunderstandings about the passage. The response is sparse and may provide few, if any relevant details from the passage.
0	Response is totally inaccurate and/or irrelevant or there is no response.

Grade 5 Mathematics Sample Question 1

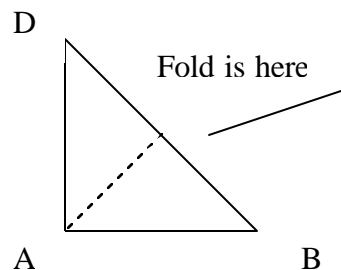
1

Using a square, fold it in half diagonally on dotted line. (Fold point C to point A)



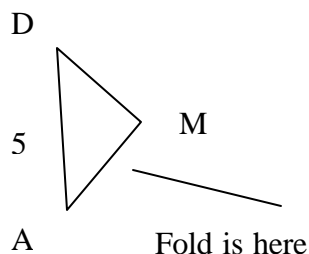
2

Fold again diagonally on dotted line. (Fold point B to Point D)



3

(NOTE: Drawings are not to scale)



- 4
- A. Based on the data in Box 3, what is the perimeter and area of the original square shown in Box 1? Show your work.
 - B. Draw the triangle shown in Box 2 and label the number of degrees of each angle.
 - C. What is the total number of degrees of all the angles in the triangle in Box 2?
 - D. What fractional part of the square is showing in the triangle in Box 3?
 - E. Explain the relationship between the two triangles. Provide reasons for your answer.

Grade 5 Mathematics Sample Question 2

A group of students are planning to bake cookies for their class at school.

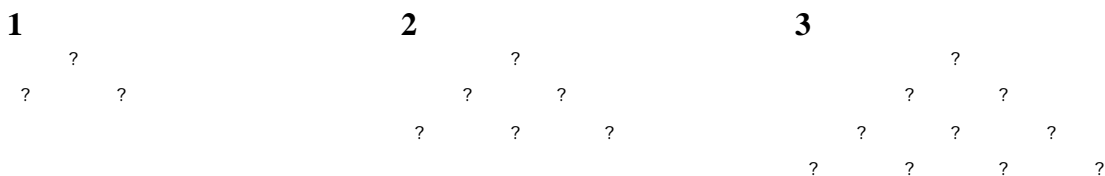
- A. Taylor, John, Marie, and David each brought two dozen cookies to share with their class. How many cookies are available for the class to share? Show your work.
- B. If they have 22 students and one teacher in their class, how many whole cookies will each student and their teacher receive if they are evenly shared? Show your work.
- C. They decide to give the leftover whole cookies to the office. How many cookies will the office staff share? Show your work.

23

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Grade 8 Mathematics Sample Question 1

1. Using the pattern and the table shown below, draw the fourth and fifth figures. Fill in the blank areas in the table provided below the figures and draw the sixth figure. Write an algebraic expression, that predicts the number of dots in the n^{th} column.



Based on the pattern and using the table below, draw figures for 4 and 5.

4	5
---	---

Fill in all the blanks in the table below and then draw figure 6.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3	6	10	15	21			
6							

Write an algebraic expression, that predicts the number of dots in the n^{th} column.

Grade 8 Mathematics Sample Question 2

The following three 9th grade classes took a pre-test in science. They then received some instruction, performed some experiments, and analyzed their findings. The next day they took a post-test.

Pre-test data:

Mrs. Black's Class Scores: 80, 31, 52, 68, 34, 73, 38, 61, 72, 48

Mr. John's Class Scores: 34, 43, 52, 78, 51, 69, 57, 70, 47, 79, 41, 54, 82, 65

Ms. Rodger's Class Scores: 64, 59, 60, 72, 55, 61, 48, 63, 66, 70

Post-test data:

Mrs. Black's Class Scores: 72, 91, 75, 69, 59, 93, 77, 72, 54, 95

Mr. John's Class Scores: 55, 62, 73, 97, 72, 88, 78, 89, 68, 98, 62, 73, 100, 86

Ms. Rodger's Class Scores: 85, 80, 80, 93, 80, 82, 80, 84, 92, 91

- A. Using the above data, design a stem-and-leaf plot to demonstrate the range and median of each class's pre-test and post-test scores. Based on this information, make three statements about the performance of the classes.
- B. Calculate the mean averages for each class to demonstrate which class scored the highest on the pre-test and on the post-test. Show all your work.
- C. Using your calculations in parts A and B, describe which class improved most and provide details explaining why. Show your work.

Constructed Response Scoring Rubric for Math

Score Point	Expectation
3	<p>The response completely answers all parts of the question and displays thorough understanding of the skill(s) within the standard being tested. The response provides an answer that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly and correctly indicates the mathematical ideas and process applied and provides evidence of the problem-solving techniques and/or thinking skills used to solve the problem. • clearly and correctly labels all answers, if required
2	<p>The response partially, but adequately answers the question and displays satisfactory understanding of the skill(s) being tested. The response provides an answer that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • correctly completes all parts of the task, but contains minor flaws in the reasoning or a minor notational error in recording a solution to a part of the problem • completes the entire task, but uses incomplete, or disorganized information to represent the solution process and/or a problem solution
1	<p>The response demonstrates a limited understanding of the skill(s) being</p>

tested. The response provides an answer that:

- correctly solves the problem, but does not provide clearly acceptable answers for the entire problem.
- provides an acceptable response for one part of the question, but fails to attempt a solution for the other part(s) of the problem.

0 The response demonstrates a lack of understanding of the skill(s) being tested. The response provides an answer that:

- does not answer the question clearly enough to demonstrate any understanding.
- provides incorrect or inappropriate responses to the question
- or there is no response.

Grade 5 Science Sample Question 1

Sound travels at different speeds depending on the kind of medium present. Based on the chart below, describe **at least two** properties that might affect the speed of sound waves. Use details from the chart to support your answer.

Speed of Sound in Different Mediums

Medium	Speed m/s
granite at 25° C	6,000
steel at 25° C	5,200
iron at 0° C	5,130
iron at 25° C	5,103
aluminum at 25° C	5,000
glass at 25° C	4,540
oak at 25° C	3,850
copper at 0° C	3,560
seawater at 25° C	1,531
water at 25° C	1,498
water at 0° C	1,435
alcohol at 0° C	1,213
cork at 25° C	500
air at 100° C	386
air at 0° C	331

Source: <http://home.att.net/~cat4a/wave-II.htm> and *Heath Physical Science*, 1984

Grade 5 Science Sample Question 2

Describe how the benefits of the earth's resources (e.g., fresh water, air, soil, and trees) can be reduced by using them wastefully or deliberately or inadvertently destroying them. Provide at least three present-day examples of overuse of earth's resources and the problems associated with them.

Grade 5 Science Sample Question 3

Over time, part of rock on a mountaintop turned up on a riverbed as a grain of sand. Describe the natural processes that might have occurred to allow this grain of sand's travels. Include:

- A. How the matter has changed
- B. How the matter has stayed the same
- C. Natural occurrences to cause change

Grade 5 Science Sample Question 4

Doug wanted to test the magnetism of several objects: a key, a plastic comb, rubber bands, an iron woodscrew, a paperclip, and a piece of string.



A. Copy the table shown below.

Object	Magnetism Test
	Magnetic Yes or No
key	
plastic comb	
rubber bands	
iron nail	
paper clip	
piece of string	

B. Tell whether each object is magnetic by writing yes or no in the column next to each object.

C. Identify characteristics that the magnetic items have in common.

Grade 8 Science Sample Question 1

During World War II, DDT was commonly used to kill flies and other insects. However after several years, it became less effective in destroying flies. Explain what might have happened to the fly population to make it so that DDT was not as effective. What impact did the change in the fly population have on the flies that exist today?

Grade 8 Science Sample Question 2

Using a diagram/drawing, demonstrate the positions of the sun, earth, and moon during a solar eclipse and during a lunar eclipse. Describe how the sun and the moon seem to “disappear” in each.

Grade 8 Science Sample Question 3

Think about Newton’s first law of motion (an object in motion tends to stay in motion while an object at rest tends to stay at rest.) Design an experiment using a ball and a ramp to demonstrate this law. Make sure your design includes:

- A. An experimental or testable variable that might affect the distance the ball will travel when released at the top of the ramp
- B. A description of how the experimental variable will be tested during the experiment
- C. Two control variables that will not be changed during the experiment.

Grade 8 Science Sample Question 4

Describe how sound waves and water waves are similar. How are they different? Include at least two examples for each.

Grade 8 Science Sample Question 5

Describe how cells, grow, divide, and take in nutrients, which they use to provide energy for cellular functions.

Constructed Response Scoring Rubric for Science

Score Point

3

Expectation

The response completely answers all parts of the question through displaying knowledge of basic facts, conceptual understanding, and/or practical reasoning of the science standard being tested. The response provides an answer that:

- clearly and correctly indicates the scientific ideas applied and provides evidence of understanding
- clearly and correctly labels

- all answers, if required
- 2** The response partially, but adequately answers the question and displays satisfactory knowledge of basic facts, conceptual understanding, and/or practical reasoning of the science standard being tested. The response provides an answer that:
- correctly completes all parts of the task, but contains minor flaws or incomplete/incorrect portions.
 - completes the entire task, but uses some incomplete, or partially correct information.
- 1** The response demonstrates a limited understanding of the knowledge of basic facts, conceptual understanding, and/or practical reasoning of the science standard being tested. The response provides an answer that:
- may contain significant errors/misconceptions in the response
 - offers an acceptable response for one part of the question, but fails to attempt a solution for the other part(s).
- 0** The response demonstrates a lack of understanding of basic facts, conceptual understanding, and/or practical reasoning of the science standard being tested. The response provides an answer that:
- contains insufficient evidence of appropriate skills/knowledge
 - provides incorrect or inappropriate responses to the question
 - or there is no response.

II. Grades 4 and 8 Writing Examinations

The analytic trait scoring assessment is designed to provide assistance in diagnosing writing skills and giving specific instructional feedback on student writing. Writing prompts are written to allow for some individual development and are purposefully open-ended to allow for individual student background information and interests.

Examples

Example of 4th Grade Writing Prompt for Divergent Thinking:

Acts of Kindness:

In life we sometime give and sometimes receive thoughtful acts and deeds from others without expecting rewards. At different times we may only watch such actions. Tell a story about an act of kindness in which you either took part or that you saw. Make sure you have a beginning, middle, and ending to your story.

Example of 8th Grade Writing Prompt for Divergent Thinking:

The Environment:

The environment in which we live is a precious resource. Explain about one environmental problem you think is important. Tell why it is significant and offer some solutions.

Teacher Tips

Teacher tips for student preparation for writing assessments

- ⇒ Provide practice sessions of writing
 - in different modes
 - to prompts for a variety of audiences and purposes
 - in timed situations
- ⇒ Share scoring rubrics and examples of writing that meet the criteria
 - in single traits
 - using two or more traits
 - applying a holistic rubric
- ⇒ Have students practice scoring and discussing examples
 - in large and small groups
 - as an individual/center activity
- ⇒ Structure opportunities for students to self-evaluate writing using the rubrics in
 - personal reflection with portfolio assessment
 - teacher-student conferences
 - peer review situations
- ⇒ Model writing techniques as a group, then allow sufficient practice time to
 - imitate and experiment
 - to reflect and revise
 - share with others

- ⇒ Consider individual parts of the process, i.e. only introductions, conclusions, transitions, generating, organizing ideas or editing techniques, because not all writing
 - needs to go completely through the process
 - should eventually be published
 - must be shared with writing groups
- ⇒ Create group and/or individual checklists for
 - revision practice
 - editing procedures (Revision and editing are different operations.)
- ⇒ Write for and with your students on a regular basis to model the craft of writing
 - Read aloud for and with your students on a regular basis to examine and discuss those writers whose craft you admire

Trait-by-Trait Tips

Ideas and Development

Quality, not quantity is the hallmark of good idea development. It is using precise information with specific details at just the right moment that makes for an excellent piece of writing.

In whole group and small groups, help students to carefully understand and explain what the prompt might be asking for and what best strategies could be used in responding. Then, experiment with pre-writing tactics: clusters, lists, word associations, drawings or diagrams, monologue free-writes, etc., so that a variety of tools will be available to produce ideas.

Organization

This is often the trait that provides the most difficulty for students. Once ideas are generated and main points are determined, students need information on various organizational patterns, i.e., time or spatial orders or most/least important. They also need techniques for framing their ideas once the order is established: outlining, arrows, color-coding, post-it sorting, graphic organizers can be used to build the framework of the piece. Some students benefit with practice using concrete visual organizers for reasons/ideas including the "hamburger paragraph" and the five-part essay. Students need practice with a variety of introduction styles as well as formats for conclusions.

Voice

An understanding of appropriate diction and style for audience and purpose are a part of voice, as is the individualistic, expressive flair that demonstrates ownership of a piece of writing. Writers with voice show strong awareness of audience and can purposely use voice to influence the response of the audience. Direct students in using vivid word choices to show rather than tell readers about ideas.

Conventions

Coach students in how to silently "read aloud" their pieces to listen for errors or irregularities in their writing. Share proofreading strategies, i.e. reading for only one type

of error such as punctuation at a time or reading from the end to the beginning, or isolating one section at a time for careful perusal. Students may make correction on the original drafts of their writing tests, provided they are done neatly and legibly. This is important during a timed writing assessment, as there is often not sufficient time to copy over when an additional error is discovered.

Lower scored papers tend to:

- Provide generalities that sound like a list
- Omit specific details
- Ramble and get off track
- Offer no recognizable organizational structure
- Have difficulty with sentence formation and include fragments and run-ons
- Include errors to spelling and grammar that distract the reader from the ideas

Higher scored papers tend to:

- Have a clear focus and stay on topic
- Include fresh original ideas and language
- Organize and elaborate ideas in ways that engage and maintain interest
- Use standard conventions correctly and creatively

Resources for Writing Teachers

National Professional Organizations

National Council of Teachers of English

1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801

Publications including books and periodicals. Collegial group meetings.

<http://www.ncte.org/teach/>

National Writing Project

5511 Tolman Hall, #1670

University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720

<http://www.writingproject.org/>

Southern Nevada Writing Project

Rosemary Holmes-Gull, Director

Dr. Marilyn McKinney Co-Director

Department of C & I Box 455016

4505 Maryland Parkway

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-5016

phone (702) 895-3247 fax (702) 895-4898

<http://www.unlv.edu/programs/snwp/>

Great Basin Writing Project

Robert McGinty, Director

Vicki Rossolo, Co-Directors

Great Basin College

1500 College Parkway

Elko, NV 89801

phone (775) 753-2177 fax (775) 738-2168

<http://www.gbcnv.edu/gbwp>

Northern Nevada Writing Project

Corbett Harrison, Director

Dr. Kathy Boardman, Kay Henjum, Co-Directors

College of Education, MS 288

University of Nevada, Reno

Reno, NV 89557

phone (775) 784-4951 fax (775) 784-4758

<http://www.nnwp.org>

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

Assessment and Evaluation Program with 6-trait writing model.

Website has pre-scored student samples, writing lessons and products

<http://www.nwrel.org/assessment/assessment.asp>

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Appendix A

Writing as a Process

Writing is a means of discovering, of reflecting on thought processes, and a means of sharing those thoughts with others. It involves problem solving, decision making, conceptualizing and critical thinking skills as well as information processing skills. Young writers use writing to develop social awareness by collecting and exchanging new insights and thereby enriching each others' concepts. They use writing as a powerful means to persuade, inform, explain, and influence, as well as a means of interacting with texts and with others' perspectives. Writing is an across-the-curriculum activity.

When teachers describe writing as a process, they are attempting to describe the complex system of transforming thought into written communication. Teachers of writing have revised their practice of simply assigning and evaluating a writing piece by proofreading and editing, to concern for each of the stages writers go through in producing the end product. Those stages: prewriting, composing, sharing/ responding, revising, editing, publishing, and evaluating, are all seen as tools in developing creative thinking and writing. However, these tools are not a rigid set of procedures to be followed in a linear manner. The process is individual and recursive in that the sequence in which the procedures and strategies are used varies with each writer and each new piece of writing. Some activities are necessarily repeated and overlap one another. For example, while the writer is still in the early prewriting or thinking stage, before ideas are even set down on paper, he/she may seek response to confirm and/or revise for the intended purpose and audience of a writing piece.

In order for writing to improve it is recognized that:

- Writers must read as well as write
- Writing is a skill that must be practiced
- Writing instruction must allow experimentation and adaptation
- Writers should practice flexibility by trying a variety of forms and contexts and for different audiences
- Writers should speak and listen to their own words
- Writers learn by reflecting on the processes they use
- Writers must assume editorial responsibility and take pride in what they write to be published.

Prewrite

Prewriting activities are designed to help the flow of ideas before any formal writing begins. Since writing stems from a need or desire to communicate, it is the portion of the process that contains activities that encourage writers' abilities to generate ideas fluently, to help them discover what they want to say and how to communicate it. It includes any directed activity or exercise that motivates the writer to produce and express his/her ideas for the intended audience and purpose (e.g., describe, explain, persuade, share, etc.) It is a gathering of thoughts, often by first exploring what is already known, and discussing

what is additionally needed on a self-selected or assigned topic. It can be done as a member of a group or as an individual activity. It can include all or any of the following methods:

- Discussing
- Brainstorming
- Mapping
- Clustering
- Venn diagrams
- Listing
- Reading
- Debating
- Listening
- Viewing
- Sketching/drawing
- Interviewing
- Designing and evaluating questionnaires
- Free-writing
- Jotting down key words and phrases, dialogues, facts
- Developing sensory details
- Graphic organizers
- Fantasizing or dramatizing
- Answering who, what, where, when, why, how questions

As in all phases of the writing process, it is important to allow writers, after they have been introduced to a variety of techniques, their own choice of methods. Prewriting techniques can be revisited during periods of "writers block" during the drafting and revisions phases, and again during the evaluation phase of the writing process.

Draft

This step in the writing process allows the writer's formulated ideas to take shape by putting words to paper. Because the writer may still be unaware of what he/she wants to communicate, this is sometimes a process of discovery by which shape and form begin to emerge. At this stage, writers consciously construct sentences, paragraphs, and longer compositions, keeping in mind the topic, the purpose, the audience, the tone/voice, and the organization and structure to be used. These activities should not be impeded by grammatical editing concerns.

Writing in this phase usually consists of more than one draft of writing. Instruction might include methods designed to prioritize, classify, elaborate and/or connect ideas. The best teaching techniques encourage students to pull topics from their own minds to maintain responsibility and ownership of the expression of their own thoughts and ideas. Often, this is a place where writers discover what they really want to say in a piece of writing; ideas and whole drafts are sometimes abandoned and redrafted. It is a place to experiment with a variety of modes and techniques to express ideas, and it requires

adequate time and ample encouragement.

While some writers like to plan an opening sentence or lead and begin there, some writers simply begin writing about their topic and worry about structure later. Some write telling sentences, then work on transforming them into showing pieces. Others write dialogue, then transform that dialogue into prose or poetry. Like the writing process itself, drafting is not a linear activity and varies with each writer and each piece of writing.

Response

Response is a powerful stage of the writing process that allows an author to share a writing draft with an audience, often peers, who can provide positive feedback and reinforcement of good writing. It provides an opportunity for writers to examine what they are saying to determine if it is indeed what they want to say, and if their purpose to communicate a specific idea has been accomplished. It is a time for students to talk through their ideas and assess their own thinking, and it allows writers time to revise or possibly reassess their intention. It gives student writers a sense of power of their words to impact others while gaining a sense of what distinguishes effective from ineffective writing. Additionally, it encourages enthusiasm for ideas and the writing that expresses those ideas. Perhaps, most importantly, response brings a necessity for revision and editing skills, the next stages of the writing process.

Response activities can come from individual peers, conferencing with teachers, parents, or other adults or with peer feedback groups. Instructional lessons for peer feedback groups are teacher directed and might include:

- teacher modeling of appropriate and helpful response techniques which usually include at least one read aloud by the author
- the use of training papers fictitiously or anonymously authored for response modeling and practice
- role playing of successful and unsuccessful collaborative response groups and debriefing on the aspects of each
- checklist models
- active listening instruction and practice in paraphrasing techniques
- author directed response whereby an author requests limited response about a specific aspect of the writing piece

In addition to response-for-revision, students need response opportunities to share their writing and thinking activities simply for the sake of sharing, with no attempt at gaining response. The emphasis in these cases is, of course, on communication rather than receiving response for the sake of revision. It allows the establishment of a risk-free environment for later response sessions, where authors actively seek response to revise.

Revision

Revision is a time to re-view or revisit a piece of writing. It can and does happen at

any time during the writing process. Some writers revise as they draft; others draft quickly, then revise. It can be in response to new ideas or different perspectives, or to the feedback given in the "response" portion of the process, but it is always an effort to strengthen the writing and to provide clarity of purpose and meaning. Revision is usually attempted through revision for ideas and for form. It is seldom neat and tidy for it is here where writers scratch out, mark over, add, delete, rephrase and reorder with concern for consistency and structure. Writers may move back to see what they've said and move forward to elaborate. It is a time to check for supporting details, add descriptions or explanations. It may even be a time to start over again. The writer now reworks the piece for not only word choice, but how those words work together, and how fluently sentences work to make the writing vivid and clear. Organization, including beginning, ending, transitions, and internal structure is examined.

Teacher instruction might include:

- play and exploration with the written word and details
- experiments with various word choices and transitions
- sentence combining activities
- checklist problem/solution charts
- use of flow charts or timelines or outlines
- methods of elaboration and achieving unity
- teacher modeling of revision devices (i.e., cross-outs, carets, arrows, asterisks coloring and other codes, cut and tape, etc.)

Edit

This portion of the writing process prepares a piece for publishing by dealing with correctness as identified by the generally accepted standards of written English. It includes editing for spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, usage, sentence combining, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, paragraphing, or anything that would detract from the enjoyment and understanding of the piece of writing. Good proofreading often takes several perusals and can be accomplished through one or all of the following:

- personal editing using edit checklists, dictionaries, thesauruses, usage handbooks,
- word processing spell and grammar checks
- peer/group or family editing
- teacher conferencing

It is sometimes useful to proofread several times, each time for different kinds of mistakes. It is also beneficial to allow enough time to put the paper aside for a while before editing a second time.

Teacher instruction may include:

- read-alouds for specific errors (i.e., punctuation, run-on sentences, missing words, etc.)
- mini lessons on editing rules
- teacher directed conference where an individual editing skill is taught

- introduction and practice with proofreading symbols
- techniques for ease in finding errors (i.e., reading aloud, starting with the last word and reading backwards one word at a time, circling questionable spellings, etc.)
- practice in desktop publishing techniques

Publish

This portion can take many forms, but they each celebrate the finished piece of writing by sharing it with an audience or a variety of audiences. As the writing is shared it reinforces the initial writing purpose and validates the entire writing process.

Writing pieces can be read aloud, posted in the classroom, put into a class book, framed in a poster, sent home to friends and family, published in a class/school publications, performed for a variety of audiences, entered in an anthology, audio or videotaped, submitted to general publications or contests, or any of a number of additional forms of publishing that recognize the accomplishment attained by the writer.

Evaluation

Self-evaluation can happen at the end of the piece, or any time during the writing process. It is an assessment or judgment where decisions are made about what worked well and has met the writer's expectations and intentions. When written up it can be attached to the piece being evaluated and can become part of a portfolio assessment. Teacher evaluation is where the writer receives teacher feedback. This can come in many forms: a grade, a mini lesson, a portfolio assessment, an oral conference and is best accomplished when the writer is a part of the evaluation process and is aware of the criteria by which the evaluation is being made.

Students can develop individual rubrics based on their expectations of good writing early on in the writing process, and use it as a guide during prewriting, drafting, response, and revision. An important part of the evaluation process, in addition to reflecting on current writing efforts, is a discussion of future writing goals based on the current evaluation. It makes evaluation an occasion for students and teacher to analyze and write together and provides a chance to extend writers' involvement and development.

Writing is a meaning-seeking process, an invitation to active involvement as thinkers and as learners. Even when writing is not taken through the entire writing process, it is still a valuable tool in encouraging students to explore, categorize, compare/contrast, invent, interpret, and evaluate ideas. It assists in problem solving and decision making, is a format for examining reasoning and critical thinking skills, allows the expression of thoughts in creative ways, and perhaps most importantly for educators, provides for the transference of thinking skills from one subject to another.